

**THE BELLS OF BALANGIGA: IT IS
TIME TO GO HOME**

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 13, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise today to speak about my resolution, H. Res. 313, which urges the President to authorize the transfer of ownership to the Philippines of one of the bells taken in 1901 from the town of Balangiga in the Philippines. The bells are currently displayed at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

In the 100 years since the taking of the bells occurred, the citizens of the United States and the Philippines have shared many historic and political ties. The Philippines was a staunch ally of the United States during World War II. Brave Filipino soldiers were drafted into service by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, fought side-by-side with American soldiers, and were instrumental in the successful outcome of World War II. Filipino soldiers also fought alongside our soldiers on the battlefields of Korea and Vietnam.

Since the independence of the Philippines in 1946, the U.S.-Philippine relationship has been largely one of friendship and cooperation. The Philippines is a republic patterned basically on our own system of government. The Philippines is a valuable trading partner of the U.S. and an ally in the war against terrorism. Approximately two million Americans are of Filipino descent and close to 130,000 United States citizens reside in the Philippines. The acts of conflict that surrounded the taking of the bells of Balangiga are not consistent with the friendship that is currently an integral part of the relationship between our two nations.

The Republic of the Philippines has repeatedly requested the return of the bells. They are an important symbol to the Filipino people, who wish to have them re-installed in the belfry of the Balangiga Church. I believe that it is time to resolve this situation in order to solidify the bonds between our two nations. My resolution would honor and promote the positive relationship our countries enjoy.

A compromise measure has been suggested to return one of the bells, as my resolution calls for, and to create two replica bells—one for each country. This compromise would satisfy most Filipino veterans.

As the years pass, I am confident that relations between our two nations will grow even stronger. To that end, the United States Government, which has final disposition over the Bells of Balangiga, should transfer ownership of one of the bells to the people of the Philippines as a measure of good will and cooperation. I urge the passage of my resolution.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 13, 2005

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this chamber on June 7, 2005. I would like the record to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 228 and 229.

I also inadvertently missed rollcall vote 192 on May 19, 2005. I would like the record to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote 192.

COMMENDING MS. ALMA OLIVAS

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 13, 2005

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the House's attention to the important work of one of my constituents, Alma Olivas, and her recent selection for the nation's highest community health leadership distinction.

Ms. Olivas was one of the 10 outstanding individuals from across the country chosen to receive this year's Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership award. The award also comes with a \$105,000 grant for Ms. Olivas to use to further her important efforts. Ms. Olivas works with the Coalition for Community Healthcare Access, which helps poor and uninsured people access health care in Bernalillo County, New Mexico.

A persistent and courageous advocate for the uninsured, Ms. Olivas has been working to increase access to health care from an early age. Since she was seven years old, when she moved from Mexico to Albuquerque, Ms. Olivas has served as an interpreter for extended family members and neighbors. But it was her grandmother's devastating encounter with the medical system that made it her life's work.

Her uninsured grandmother was repeatedly denied surgical treatment for a broken hip because she could not afford to pay half of the cost of the surgery upfront. Ms. Olivas became a fierce advocate, learning how to negotiate the health care system on her grandmother's behalf and eventually winning her the treatment she needed.

Since working with the Coalition for Community Healthcare Access, Ms. Olivas has increased the availability of interpreter services, improved financial assistance for low-income people, and raised community awareness of the health care problems of immigrants and the uninsured.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take the opportunity to commend Ms. Olivas for her tremendous work and to congratulate her as a recipient of the Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership award.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROGER F. WICKER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 13, 2005

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall votes Nos. 171–175, I was unavoidably absent. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: On Nos. 171–174, "yea"; on No. 175, "aye."

**CONGRATULATION TO THE TOWN
OF SOUTHWEST RANCHES**

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 13, 2005

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 1996, a bill was proposed to the Broward County Legislative Delegation to annex all of the unincorporated area between Griffin Road to the north, Sheridan Street to the south, Flamingo Road to the east and SR 27 to the west, into the City of Pembroke Pines.

Hundreds of citizens from that unincorporated area, known as the Southwest Ranches, packed the Delegation hearing in November of 1996, to protest this attempted takeover and to call for the right to form their own city. As a result of this grassroots effort, the State Legislature passed a bill during the 1997 legislative session, calling for a vote of the citizens of Southwest Ranches in March of 2000.

In the summer of 1997, Southwest Ranches Homeowners Association members agreed to actively promote incorporation of a new city for the area and formed a political committee to explore this option. A feasibility committee was appointed to determine if a new city would be viable.

On July 3, 1999, the SWRHA sponsored a parade and picnic to declare the area's independence. The bill was passed by the Florida Legislature in 1997, authorizing the vote in 2000 to determine if residents wanted to annex or form their own city. On March 14, 2000, residents voted overwhelmingly to form a new Town. The election to approve the Town's charter was held on June 6, 2000, and Council Members were elected on July 25, 2000. On that day, Southwest Ranches was officially in business.

This year, we celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of the Town of Southwest Ranches and commemorate the preservation of the beautiful land and environment that its residents love so much.

**HONORING AL VAN METRE, SR.,
CEO AND FOUNDER OF VAN
METRE COMPANIES**

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 14, 2005

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Al Van Metre, the founder and CEO of Van Metre Company. This recognition is well deserved for his contributions to the communities of Northern Virginia.

Al Van Metre attended the U.S. Naval Academy from June 1944 to March 1945 before graduating from George Washington University with a degree in engineering. Mr. Van Metre established the Van Metre Company in 1955, since that time his company has built over 15,000 single family homes, town homes and manages 2,200 apartments throughout Northern Virginia. These dwellings proudly serve over 50,000 homeowners and residents throughout Northern Virginia.